IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant : Yamazaki, et al. Art Unit : 1753
Serial No. : 08/907,182 Examiner : Alan Diamond
Filed : August 6, 1997
Title : THIN-FILM PHOTOELECTRIC CONVERSION DEVICE AND A METHOD OF MANUFACTURING THE SAME

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

OK to enter
MDO
3/23/04

REPLY TO ACTION OF OCTOBER 6, 2003

In reply to the Office Action of October 6, 2003, applicant submits the following remarks.

Claims 26-30, 32-55, 57-71, 73-76, 78, 79, 81-91, 93-99 and 103-107 are pending, with claims 26, 34, 42, 51, 59, 67, 76 and 81-89 being independent.

Claims 26-30, 32-55, 57-71, 73-76, 78, 79, 82, 86, 90, 91, 93-99 and 103-106 have been rejected for obviousness-type double patenting over claims 1-26 of U.S. Patent No. 6,544,826. Applicant requests reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection because claims 1-26 of the '826 patent fail to describe or suggest forming a gettering layer comprising phosphorus over an entire surface of the semiconductor film, as recited in each of claims 26, 34, 42, 51, 59, 67, 76, 82 and 86.

Claim 1 of the '826 patent recites applying a solution containing phosphorous in contact with a crystallized semiconductor film, and each of independent claims 8, 14 and 20 of the '826 patent recites applying a solution containing phosphorous to a selected portion of a crystallized semiconductor film. None of the claims of the '826 patent recites applying the solution to the entire surface of the semiconductor film.

Recognizing this, the action argues that application of the solution to the entire surface is within the scope of the claims of the '826 patent, and points to Fig. 1D of the '826 patent as supporting this. In particular, the action argues that the phosphorous layer 107 resulting from a solution covers the entire surface of the semiconductor layer 102, and that the presence of a mask